



News From The ...

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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Keeping Our Vow in 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, Rep. Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs issued the following statement to America's veterans and their families:

“As the clock quickly winds down on 2011, I wanted to take a few moments to reflect on what has been a productive year for the [House Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#) on behalf of America's veterans and their families.

“Throughout the year, we have been focused on ensuring our veterans and their families have access to and support from VA for the benefits they have rightly earned. To that end, the U.S. House of Representatives passed [13 pieces of veterans' legislation](#) this year, four of which are now law.

“Student veterans in private schools were able to remain in the school of their choice without incurring massive tuition increases this year thanks to the passage of the [Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act of 2011](#). We also put veterans who are out of work back on the path to employment through the [VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011](#). For the first time in years, veterans will receive an annual Cost of Living Adjustment. In addition, VA facilities across the country will receive much needed upgrades in the coming years due to the [2011 VA Construction Authorization](#). We also honored some of our most devout, forgotten heroes on Chaplains Hill at Arlington National Cemetery – our Jewish War Chaplains – who finally took their rightful place amongst the souls they gave the greatest of comforts.

“We still have more to do, however. We must end sexual assault at VA facilities once and for all. In May, we learned that because of lack of oversight, procedure, and leadership, veterans and VA employees were falling prey to such offensive acts. We took immediate action and [introduced legislation](#) to put an end to this disturbing trend. We also took steps to protect surviving spouses from foreclosure with oversight of banks' compliance with the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA). And, we remain committed to penalizing businesses that pose as Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) and take valuable contracts away from our veterans. We will continue to lean forward until these laws are in place to protect our veterans.

“There have been many questions this year, as well, about the federal budget and the impact the economy will have on VA and our veterans. We are in tight budgetary times, but VA will remain a national priority. This is demonstrated in the 2012 budget, in which funding for VA continues to increase, with particular emphasis on medical care. I remain concerned nevertheless on the effect possible sequestration might have on our veterans due to the failure of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. I will remain actively engaged in fighting for full exemption of VA from the 2013 sequestration next year, and I will continue to do all I can to resolve this issue on your behalf.

“Over the past 10 years, we have made great strides in caring for our veterans and providing them with the tools needed to reintegrate when they return home, looking particularly at programs to

help at-risk veterans to help them lead healthy, productive lives. With the last of our troops coming home this month from Iraq, we expect that many younger veterans will enter the VA system, but we also need to meet the needs of veterans already in the system. We will continue that work in 2012 to create a more holistic, integrated system that addresses not only each generation's concerns, but most important, individual concerns.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the [Members of the Committee](#) – they have been devoted advocates on your behalf and I know in 2012, we will continue to put forth thoughtful, meaningful legislation. I promise that we will remain vigilant to make sure that the needs of all veterans are met.

"I also extend my gratitude and admiration to each of you this Christmas season for your service and sacrifice on behalf of our great nation. I wish you a healthy and safe new year filled with joy."

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